

## Differences Between Women? Intersecting Voices in a Female Narrative

Ludvig, Alice

Postprint / Postprint

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:

[www.peerproject.eu](http://www.peerproject.eu)

### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Ludvig, A. (2006). Differences Between Women? Intersecting Voices in a Female Narrative. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 13(3), 245-258. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506806065755>

### Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter dem "PEER Licence Agreement zur Verfügung" gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zum PEER-Projekt finden Sie hier: <http://www.peerproject.eu>. Gewährt wird ein nicht exklusives, nicht übertragbares, persönliches und beschränktes Recht auf Nutzung dieses Dokuments. Dieses Dokument ist ausschließlich für den persönlichen, nicht-kommerziellen Gebrauch bestimmt. Auf sämtlichen Kopien dieses Dokuments müssen alle Urheberrechtshinweise und sonstigen Hinweise auf gesetzlichen Schutz beibehalten werden. Sie dürfen dieses Dokument nicht in irgendeiner Weise abändern, noch dürfen Sie dieses Dokument für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, aufführen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Mit der Verwendung dieses Dokuments erkennen Sie die Nutzungsbedingungen an.

**gesis**  
Leibniz-Institut  
für Sozialwissenschaften

### Terms of use:

This document is made available under the "PEER Licence Agreement". For more information regarding the PEER-project see: <http://www.peerproject.eu>. This document is solely intended for your personal, non-commercial use. All of the copies of this document must retain all copyright information and other information regarding legal protection. You are not allowed to alter this document in any way, to copy it for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the document in public, to perform, distribute or otherwise use the document in public.

By using this particular document, you accept the above-stated conditions of use.

Mitglied der  
**Leibniz**  
Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

# Differences Between Women?

## Intersecting Voices in a Female Narrative

Alice Ludvig

UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA

---

**ABSTRACT** The 'intersectionality' approach in feminist theory postulates that differences between women, such as age, ethnicity, class, nationality, sexuality, etc. do intersect. However, intersectionality starts to get blurred when examined concretely because the list of differences is always endless. There is frequently silence about concrete questions such as: who defines when, where and which of these differences are rendered important in particular conceptions, and which are not? This article examines how categories of difference and identity interplay and intersect by analysing a narrative life-interview with a female migrant to Vienna. It aims to make visible some of her specific identifications and differentiations and how these are located in time and space, by focusing on her self-presentation and the categories of difference such as gender, class and ethnicity that she introduces. Through this the article aims to contribute to discussions of the dynamism of subjectivities and power relations.

**KEY WORDS** class ♦ difference ♦ ethnicity ♦ gender ♦ identity ♦ intersectionality ♦ life-story ♦ narratives

### INTRODUCTION

The African American feminist writer Audre Lorde stated at the anniversary conference of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* in New York in 1979:

If white American feminist theory need not deal with the differences between us, and the resulting difference in our oppressions, then how do you deal with the fact that the women who clean your houses and tend your children while you attend conferences on feminist theory are, for the most part, poor women and women of color? What is the theory behind racist feminism? (Lorde, 1984: 112)

In the middle of the 1970s, the political critique by US-Black feminists of white feminist theory began to make itself heard; its main critique was of the marginalization of Black and Third World women in mainstream feminist theory where the category of race and the phenomenon of racism were not reflected. Hence, feminist theory had focused strongly on gender difference (man vs woman) therefore relying implicitly on homogenized womanhood and ignoring differences between women.

Since at least the mid-1980s, the focus of gender studies in political theory has moved away from gender as a dichotomous category (see Squires, 1999). Simply put, the binary opposition, man vs woman, is no longer the only point of interest. Research turned from the dichotomy of gender to the reconsideration of differences and inequalities *between* women. This framework has been labelled the 'diversity approach' in feminist theory.<sup>1</sup> The normative frame of the diversity approach posits a dynamic plurality among women on the grounds that no group is homogeneous, as there are many differences between its individual members. Accordingly, the ascriptions of markers of difference/identity such as gender, colour,<sup>2</sup> ethnicity, social status, sexuality, nationality, religion, age and so on do intersect. It was the US jurist Kimberlé Crenshaw who coined the term 'intersectionality' for the phenomenon of the merging and mingling of multiple markers of difference (Crenshaw, 1989) or 'intersections' (see Higginbotham, 1992; King, 1988; Moore, 1994; Schein and Strasser, 1997). Most elaborations implicitly recommend an inclusive approach to analyses of minority groups: the inclusion of differences in the analysis of power struggles and inequalities for minority groups.

The strengths of this approach are clearly that it reflects on 'otherness' and strives to avoid essentialized, fixed and homogenized assumptions of identities. It moves away from 'genderism', that is a fixation on the sex-gender dichotomy in feminist theorizing and analysis that marginalizes the effects of other differences on women.

The weaknesses of intersectionality become more obvious when trying to apply it to empirical analysis: its implications for empirical analysis are, on the one hand, a seemingly insurmountable complexity and, on the other, a fixed notion of differences. This is because the list of differences is endless or even seemingly indefinite. It is impossible to take into account *all* the differences that are significant at any given moment. Subjectively, it is often not possible for a woman to decide whether she has been discriminated against just because of her gender or for another reason such as a foreign accent. This is precisely the problem of intersectionality: the axes of differences cannot be isolated and desegregated. In this way, differences like gender, colour and class do not add but multiply: a Black woman is not oppressed 'twice' but many times (King, 1988).

But what follows epistemologically, then, is that the 'and so on'

becomes the Achilles heel of intersectional approaches, as the list of differences is infinite (Butler, 1990: 143; see also Klinger, 1995: 813). Butler suggests that:

Theories of feminist identity that elaborate predicates of colour, sexuality, ethnicity, class and able-bodiedness invariably close with an embarrassed 'etc.' at the end of the list. Through this horizontal trajectory of adjectives, these positions strive to encompass a situated subject, but invariably fail to be complete. This failure, however, is instructive: what political impetus is to be derived from such exasperated 'etc.' that so often occurs at the end of such lines? (Butler, 1990: 143)

The endlessness of differences seems to be a weak point in intersectional theory. The approach starts to get blurred with questions that are often avoided in published work: *Who* defines *when*, *where*, *which* and *why* particular differences are given recognition while others are not? (See also Klinger, 1995.)

This article aims to provide insights into these questions. Still, the question of *how* to approach this remains open. Leslie McCall (2005) has recently discussed questions of how to study the complexity of intersectionality and proposes three approaches:

First, a 'categorical approach' affirms categories and has the potential to study the relationships *between* categories in quantitative research. It is useful for instance to model wage indicators and income differences between (fixed) groups (McCall, 2005: 1790). The categorical approach resolves our problem of indefinite complexity: it determines in advance the point where the long list will end, which requires the empirical use of preselected categories. This approach is not relevant to the aims of this article and will not be discussed further.

Second, McCall elaborates on what she calls the 'anti-categorical' approach (McCall, 2005: 1779). This is the postmodern critique of categorization *per se*, or as she points out, an 'anti-categorical critique of categorization' (McCall, 2005: 1779). In simple terms, after postmodern deconstructionism, gender becomes the product of certain discourses and hence the category of gender becomes obsolete. The same holds true for the category of 'race' and so on. The results in each case demonstrate the artificiality of social categories (and subsequently their intersections), as has been shown in historical science with the method of genealogy, in the study of literature by way of deconstruction and in anthropology with new ethnography.

The anti-categorical approach also leads away from my research interests, since I want both to examine intersectionality in relation to empirical material *and* acknowledge its groundings in social reality. This seems like a balancing act, because on the one hand I affirm categories while on the other hand I still want to be free to call them into question.

It seems to me that Black feminists'<sup>3</sup> critiques come very close to this: first, despite rejecting the validity of categorizations, Black feminists acknowledge that it is impossible to avoid using categories strategically for political purposes. Second, despite rejecting the validity of categorizations, feminists of colour do not reject the social reality that is manifest in their everyday lives. For example, despite sex and gender being the product of certain discourses, they have 'real' consequences for our existence in everyday life (*Geschlecht als Existenzweise*, Maihofer, 1995). Likewise, despite our understandings of the concept of 'race' as a man-made classification and in no way a biological 'truth', the phenomenon of racism is still alive and produced in everyday interactions.

According to McCall, methodologically 'personal narratives' and 'single group-studies' can be used to study the intersections of some single dimensions of multiple categories in selected social positions (McCall, 2005: 1781). McCall calls this third approach an 'intra-categorical approach': it does not intend to address the complexity of a full range of dimensions in a full range of categories. 'Narrative' in this approach can be literary, historical, discursive or autobiographical (McCall, 2005: 1781).

This is why I chose a single self-presentation to look at differences and their intersections *within* individuals as well as in the relations with others, including myself, which the single person position presents. Wortham (2001) has shown how autobiographical narratives position the narrator in an ongoing dialogue with other speakers. In the following sections, I first elaborate my approach and then apply it to one female self-positioning in a concrete example.

## LINKING NARRATIVE WITH IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE

Simply put, the question I raise here is: How do categories of difference and identity intersect in a narrative? Some authors distinguish between a story and a narrative, the former denoting the 'story' told by the individuals and the latter meaning the means of enquiry (Roberts, 2002: 177). For my purposes here, I use narrative, narration and story interchangeably to denote the spoken and later transcribed text of a person's freely narrated associations.

In his examination of a narrative, Wortham (2001: 76ff.) uses as an example of a single person's narrative a half-guided open interview that results in a dialogue between interviewer and interviewee. Wortham's main focus is the understanding of how the narrator positions her storytelling self with respect to two types of presented self (an active, assertive one and a passive, vulnerable one) and with respect to the interviewer. I am focusing here less on empowerment in self-representations than on the constructions of categories of difference and identity in the narrative

events presented by one person. By categories of difference I mean categories of distinction like sex, class, gender, nationality, race, ethnicity and age.

From the point of view of the individual subject, it is through narration that the axes of identity and subjectivity become explicit: when we acknowledge that subjectivity is the way people make sense of their relation to the world, it becomes the modality of identity. *How* a person perceives or conceives an event (and speaks about it) would therefore vary according to how she is culturally constructed, what she identifies herself with and/or differentiates herself from.

In this respect, the concepts of 'identity' and 'difference' are mutually constitutive. This is primarily because, in its structure, difference is based on binary oppositions like nature/culture, male/female, black/white, raw/cooked and so on (e.g. the structuralists de Saussure [1974] and Lévi-Strauss [1966]). The interesting point here is that the dichotomies are not 'neutral'; they have been the means of fixing meaning in ways that secure power relations and inequalities in and of themselves (see Derrida, 1979). In other words, the binary oppositions of difference construct classification systems through which meanings are produced. In this respect, identities are constructed the moment that people appeal to differences within such classification systems. On the one hand, difference can be used to create positive insider perceptions and representations of the self (identity) while, on the other hand, difference may be used to construct a negative view from the 'outside'. This encompasses the stigmatizing of people and groups on grounds of difference, the resultant phenomena being xenophobia, sexism, racism and so on.

Presumably, the concept of identity owes its attractiveness to its prominent position within one big debate in social theory, namely about the relationships between structure and agency (Giddens, 1971, 1984). The major questions here are: To what extent are individuals externally shaped by classificatory systems that are assumed to be outside, prior to and independent of particular persons? And to what extent do individual actors shape and structure their world through their interactions? These two extremes are mutually exclusive: the more the individual's identity is shaped by structure, the less it can influence the structures, the more it has the ability to create and define its identity the more it might shape the structures themselves. For this latter viewpoint, the individual's ability to define their identity will depend on the resources it has, or as Bourdieu says, its social, cultural and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1976, 1983). In addition, Bourdieu has equipped the discussion on the relationship between structure and agency with the concept of 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1976: 165), a means to link and combine both: individuals act within 'fields', and within these fields they can shape the structures and are mutually shaped by them. The ability to act is dependent on the resources

available, which determine their status within the field and in relation to the other individuals.

From this perspective, my research focus is based on the classic tension between the more flexible way identity and subjectivity are perceived by individuals and the more static way that they are shaped by (political) structures. This brings us to my last assumption for my example (which is located in Austria): what can the self perceptions and positioning narrated in the interview tell us about the politico-social structures in Austria? Austria is still a self-declared non-immigration country with particular legal provisions and restrictions for its third country, non-EU residents. It is important to emphasize the fact that difference (and its intersections) cannot be treated as abstracted from power relations (see Phoenix, 1998). The narration can, therefore, reveal how the individual concerned perceives legal restrictions as well as their everyday interactions. Perceptions can, therefore, be situated in the Austrian context. Succinctly, the research focuses on the following operational question for analysis: Which notions of belonging, identity and differentiation are articulated in the interview narrative that informs this article?

## THE NARRATION

The interview reported here lasted nine-and-a-half hours and was conducted over several weeks in four sessions between February and May 2005 in Vienna. The interview partner is Dora,<sup>4</sup> a 29-year-old migrant from Bulgaria who has lived in Austria since spring 2001. Her academic level is high: Dora has a masters degree in political science and international relations from the Central European University in Sofia. She is legally resident in Austria because she has a student visa to be a full-time student at the University of Vienna, where she studies law. Since she does not hold an Austrian work permit, she is reduced to very low-paid, illegal and unskilled work and, in her own words, only studies to maintain her legal status through the student visa.<sup>5</sup> Before the first interview, we had never met and all she knew about me was that I am interested in life-stories.

The autobiographical method I employ is partly based on Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal's (Fischer-Rosenthal and Rosenthal, 1997a, 1997b; Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal, 2000) method of free association – the main principles of which include: using open questions, avoiding 'why', 'where', 'who' and 'when'<sup>6</sup> questions and following the respondents' wording and phrasings. For the initial phase, which took two-and-a-half uninterrupted hours, I began the interview with the following single and very open statement: 'I am interested in your life-story. Please tell me everything that comes to your mind and that you would like to tell.

Everything that is important to you is important to me.<sup>7</sup> Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal use their autobiographical method to study family and life-stories. Their sociohistorical perspective distinguishes between experienced life ('life as lived') and life-history ('narrated life'/'life as told') because they try on the one hand to reconstruct what the narrator actually experienced during the sequences of their life and on the other, how they present their life in a present-day interview (Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal, 2000: 459ff.).

My goal is more modest: I am focusing on the presentations of self through language ('narrated life'/'life as told') and the ways that categories of difference and identity are used in these. In other words, I am not interested in the biography as such, but in the current self-positioning in a specific setting in time and place. I use the narrative autobiographical interview technique because it helps to generate a self-reflexive text of this kind.

Dora theoretically has a repertoire of possible stories, so any story presented is a selection. Moreover, she is engaged in a research interview, and regardless of the very open setting, necessarily relates to me as the interviewer. This could explain why, for instance, 90 percent of her stories are located in Bulgaria. First, it seems plausible that she wanted to explain Bulgaria to me as someone who has never been there. Half of her stories on Bulgaria are valued as 'positive' and deal with the landscape, family life and social activities. The other half can be regarded as 'negative', telling about the bad economic and political situation, corruption, criminality and poverty. Second, it seems plausible that Dora is likely to be homesick as she uses the few references to Vienna, where she has now been living for four years continuously, to explain her 'bad' economic situation in Vienna and her indecisiveness over whether to stay or to leave. She describes both options as 'negative', she does not wish to go back to Bulgaria (in her words her generation 'is lost'<sup>8</sup>) but she also does not refer to Vienna as a viable option for her (she has no fulfilling occupation and is fed up with studying all the time, see note 5).

Clearly, I have interpreted Dora's account, and interpreters always foreground certain actions as most salient. When they study someone's whole life-history the process of interpretation demands that interpreters constantly modify their 'construal of elements' in order to construct a whole out of all the elements (see Wortham, 2001: 141). This is a very subjective process. However, I was not interested in a whole life-story, but in categories of 'difference' such as gender, ethnicity and so on in order to make their intersectionality transparent. Therefore, I have examined Dora's explicit or implicit, and unprompted, associations relevant to intersectionality.



## THE ANALYSIS: CATEGORIES OF DIFFERENCE AND IDENTITY

In the first part of the analysis I ranked the narrated events in descending order according to time spent talking about the specific theme in order to get a sense of the 'importance' given to it. The long opening statement of two-and-a-half hours deals with the bad economic situation in Bulgaria and Dora's own problems. In the rest of the nine-and-a-half hours, the other themes link to members of Dora's family: here 80 percent of the narrated events deal with her brother who is six years her junior and lives in Amsterdam, and 20 percent with her mother's sporting activities.<sup>9</sup> All narrated events refer directly or indirectly to Dora as a person. This way Dora's narration presents particular representations and interpretations of the world from her own perspective – in a specific place and moment (today's Vienna). Likewise, Dora presents a particular version of herself. The following text outlines how Dora mentions and refers to differences using the example of a few (of my selected) categories of differences.

### *Gender*

Gender is a category that one is not easily 'conscious' of because, as a normative category, it is rarely questioned. Dora does not explicitly mention gender, but does so implicitly in connection with 'distinction' from her brother. As mentioned, the major part of her stories deal with him. Dora is constructing her brother in her stories as 'different' to her, first and most importantly, because 'he is a boy' as, for example, in:

Because he is a boy, and the boys they cannot talk that much, and so, give detailed information.

Second, she contrasts her brother to herself in saying that he can deal better with the capitalist system, because he has lived most of his life *after* the changes in Bulgaria:<sup>10</sup>

He was educated in the new times, exactly the reality, from an early age, in what his reality, what it really is about, the first phase of capitalism, *and he is fairly different from me.* (Translation from German original; my emphasis)

However, the subsequent passages break from the positive descriptions of her brother, as Dora criticizes him for being interested 'only in money' and constantly thinking about how to 'make money':

It never was a pleasure to him to read books or to study at home and to engage in something, he was always on the streets with all the Bulgarian flags.

In contrast to her brother, Dora likes to stay at home and read books, she is 'correct and punctual' and when she works she is reliable. She speaks about one time when she did all her brother's literature homework, and another time when he destroyed her skiing equipment that she had lent him. Then she juxtaposes herself as 'opposite' to him:

*Whatever he does, he exaggerates a bit, it is like this with people, the opposite from me. Me, for instance, I am always so . . . always so correct, always punctual, when I work on a project or something that I start with, and always when there are other people involved in the whole story, I tend to always be correct with all the people, and I do not destroy it because of little mistakes. And he is the opposite, he thinks, oh if there is a problem I will resolve it afterwards. I will think afterwards, his device is, there is a proverb . . . 'Don't trouble the trouble until the trouble troubles you' (laughs). (My emphasis)*

As her account unfolds, Dora gradually dismantles the positive picture of her brother, culminating in a sequence where she speaks about his defeat, referring to his 'childish enthusiasm':

My brother wrote an email last week and my mother has forwarded it to me, it was crazy. He lives in Amsterdam and he is as well rather confused about what he should do, because he is studying, but he wanted to go back to Bulgaria to earn money, I do not know, with investments from Holland, to open a Real Estate Bureau in Bulgaria and sell villages, whole villages to foreigners, and, yes, for people from Holland it is probably good to buy a house in the mountains, because they do not have any mountains there. But all this, all this was just something, some childish enthusiasm, and after two weeks he went back to the Netherlands again.

In these sequences, Dora is constructing herself through *difference*, difference from her younger brother, who she narrates to be what she is *not*. He is a boy; this is why he can afford to be unreliable. She underlines this with stories of being dependent on money from the family in Bulgaria and how he frequently used to lose his flight tickets. Parallel to this narrative, Dora explains her own difficult and insecure situation (in Vienna and in Bulgaria likewise). In contrast to her brother, she maintains that she would never ask her family for money. She still feels attached to the 'older values' of Communism, contrasting it with her younger brother's ability to cope better with the new challenges. She underlines this with another story about his pretending to be from the EU country Malta to get a job in Holland. This is contrasted with Dora's explanations of never daring to do likewise because of fear of discovery. Once she has dismantled her initially positive presentation of her brother, she uses the same strategy to change all the formerly negative discussion of herself into positive moral signs focusing on her insistence on correctness, neatness, punctuality and reliability.

*Class*

In Dora's narratives, class is a significant point of reference discussed as having changed with the political changes in Bulgaria and her subsequent migration to Vienna. Dora comes, in her own words, from the 'intelligentsia' in Bulgaria. In her narrative she first uses this to demonstrate that she appreciates these values because she likes to study and learn. She contrasts these values to those of present Bulgaria in which they are no longer appreciated, having been replaced with a cruder obsession with financial success and high rates of corruption and organized crime. She distinguishes herself repeatedly from the tasteless 'new money' population in Bulgaria.

*Ethnicity*

Subsequently, Dora differentiates herself from others when she reports about the diminishing Bulgarian population:

We were 9.2 million people, 2 million are abroad and I do not know what it will be in 10 years. Then we will maybe only be 5 million or so. The problem is that all Bulgarians flee and that there are some that stay, and these increase in numbers. We have a small Turkish minority and the Gypsies, now we call them Roma, that is the political-official name in Bulgaria, and this is very horrible, because in 10 years there will maybe only be Gypsies and Turkish minorities living in Bulgaria, I do not know, it is like that, it is a demographic change, and *it will not be easy to be an ethnic Bulgarian*, because the majority is abroad, they have no children or do not want any children, because they do not know how to manage the future, if they are financially capable of having children and educating them afterwards and so on. (My emphasis)

Ethnicity is understood here as subjective feelings of belonging to specific collectives, defined foremost on common ethnic grounds (for an extensive overview on theories of ethnicity, see Heinz, 1993). Dora counts herself in this passage as one of the 'ethnic Bulgarians', who are neither Gypsies nor members of the Turkish minority. She paints a picture of despair. She is afraid for the future, even the Gypsies are a threat, because of their high birth rates. This gets intensified by her presenting the Bulgarian population as having decreased to 7 million: actually Bulgaria today has 8 million inhabitants. It might be expected that Dora would talk about her own 'ethnic' situation in Austria as a foreigner, perhaps recounting some experiences with Austrian xenophobia, but she does not. Instead, she refers to her status as a Bulgarian migrant, giving examples of her poor economic situation because she is not a citizen and lacks a working permit.

---

CONCLUSIONS: INTERSECTIONALITY IN A FEMALE NARRATIVE

Dora relates to her gender identity by differentiating herself from her brother via several attributions that shift their meaning during the interview. Gendered identities, however, are not only determined by the relation between the sexes but also through its interrelationships with other categories of difference. In Dora's case nationality intersects with gender and class: as a female non-EU national living in Austria, forced to work illegally in low-paid jobs in the informal economy, Dora has non-dominant status. In her narrative of events located in Bulgaria, class intersects with ethnicity when Dora narrates herself as having dominant status, which giving examples about 'the others' – the uneducated, the nouveau riche and the Roma and Sinti in Bulgaria – demonstrates.

Furthermore, despite her academic qualifications and belonging to the Bulgarian upper middle class, Dora's migrant status means that she is confronted with political and institutional barriers that constrain her actions: she cannot find legal employment and has to extend her studies in order to keep her residence permit. This demonstrates that global and local relations of power are at the heart of *how* gender works in relation to other categories of difference. Foucault has argued that there is no place *outside* power relations; all of us are interwoven in a net of power relations, though some may take part in more dominant discourses than others (Foucault, 1997). With Dora we get a picture of how, on the one hand, the actions of single actors are determined through their structural conditions. Her position is changing, first with Bulgaria's velvet revolution and second with her migration to Austria and her confrontation with Austrian immigration laws. On the other hand, through Dora's case the interpretations and negotiation of these structures by the individual become transparent. There are probably many other ways in which Dora could have presented her life – her account is locally situated in the specific interview situation. This implies of course that, in another interview with the same person, the events narrated may well be presented differently. Not only are social existence and understandings of the self perceived differently in each situation but the 'objective' basis of conditions (gender relations, class relations, racism and sexism) changes for the individual over time and in different interactions.

Finally, Dora's agentic strategies have to be analysed together with her perspective as (dis)placed and located in the specific difficulties of her migratory situation. Her autobiographical narratives are in tension between adaptation and rejection in that she says she does not feel at home either in Austria or in Bulgaria. Although research that links gender to other categories of difference decentres gender, it does not centre any other category. Instead, the intersections of gender with other categories

of difference serve to constitute the specific quality of the gender identity in question in a specific time and place. Because they work together – and intersect – their relative prevalence shifts.

## NOTES

I am very grateful to the anonymous referees as well as the editors for their careful and most helpful comments. I also thank Eline Peterson for her comments on an earlier version.

1. After the *equality* and the *difference* approach, which both focused on gender-duality (see Kristeva, 1981), the equality stream demanded equal treatment and equal rights for men and women, while the difference stream rejected the dominant masculine social order in the name of difference and demanded special protective rights for women (see Brooks, 1997; Squires, 1999).
2. In this text, the term Black is capitalized to represent it as a political self-description and to avoid reproductions of Black and 'colour' as *objective* categories since all classifications of humans according to skin-pigmentation are man-made and therefore socially constructed.
3. I refer here to the authors of this position. Not all Black feminists (or feminists of colour) hold this position, and vice versa not all authors of this position are Black feminists.
4. The name is a pseudonym.
5. OK, I am, I am from Bulgaria and I am, I study in Vienna, unfortunately, because I have to make my status legal here, somehow. So the only possibility at the time is, to stay a student, and I am 29 years old, still a student, I mean, this is my third university here, and I have already studied at the American University in Bulgaria, first I studied for four years, and I got the Baccalaureate title, and then for two years, its name is the 'New University of Bulgaria', I got a Masters title in Political Science and International Relations and here [in Vienna] I study in addition law, the legal rules of International Relations at the Faculty of Law in Vienna.
6. Instead, the questions to keep the interview flowing should be very open; for instance 'Can you please tell me more about it?' Likewise, one should avoid prompting and taking up value positions such as: 'Oh, that must have been hard', or 'You must have been afraid'. It is advisable to encourage the narration by repeating what has already been said: 'You mentioned that you used to travel by bus from Bulgaria to Vienna, can you tell me more about that?'
7. Dora was sent the full text after transcription and did not want to make changes.
8. It is always like that, our generation, the people that are around 30, *we are somehow lost*, now, in these circumstances in Eastern Europe, because it is very unstable. . . . There is this wave of young people that left for foreign countries in the 1990s, they come back here [to

Bulgaria], they imagine that everything is better in Bulgaria, and they try to find a job during some months and to regulate their lives, but it is really hard now. (My emphasis)

9. Interestingly, no one else functions as a main character in the events told by Dora.
10. Because he is from this new generation in Bulgaria, he spent most of his life already in – after the change, he was eight years old or so, when everything changed with the –, we had no revolution in that sense, it was, we have always called it ‘the un-bloody revolution’, velvet revolution or something like that.

## REFERENCES

- Bourdieu, Pierre (1976) *Entwurf einer Theorie der Praxis auf der ethnologischen Grundlage der kabyliischen Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1983) ‘Ökonomisches Kapital, kulturelles Kapital und soziales Kapital’, pp. 183–98 in Reinhard Kreckel (ed.) *Soziale Ungleichheiten*, Soziale Welt Sonderband 2. Göttingen: Schwartz.
- Brooks, Ann (1997) *Postfeminisms: Feminism, Cultural Theory and Cultural Forms*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Butler, Judith (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé (1989) ‘Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics’, *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 138–67.
- Derrida, Jacques (1979) *On Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Spivak. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- De Saussure, Frederic (1974) *Course in General Linguistics*. London: Collins.
- Fischer-Rosenthal, Wolfram and Gabriele Rosenthal (1997a) ‘Narrationsanalyse biographischer Selbstpräsentationen’, pp. 133–65 in Ronald Hitzler and Anne Honer (eds) *Sozialwissenschaftliche Hermeneutik*. Opladen: Leske und Budrich.
- Fischer-Rosenthal, Wolfram and Gabriele Rosenthal (1997b) ‘Daniel Bertaux’s Complaints or Against False Dichotomies in Biographical Research’, *Biography and Society Newsletter* (ISA Research Committee) 38: 5–11.
- Foucault, Michel (1997) *Die Archäologie des Wissens*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp. (Orig. pub. 1969.)
- Giddens, Anthony (1971) *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Giddens, Anthony (1984) *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Heinz, Marco (1993) *Ethnizität und ethnische Identität. Eine Begriffsgeschichte*, Mundus Reihe Ethnologie, Band 72. Bonn: Holos Verlag.
- Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks (1992) ‘African-American Women’s History and the Metalanguage of Race’, *SIGNS: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17(2): 251–74.
- King, Deborah K. (1988) ‘Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology’, *SIGNS: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 14(1): 42–72.

- Klinger, Cornelia (1995) 'Über neuere Tendenzen in der Theorie der Geschlechterdifferenz', *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 43(5): 801–14.
- Kristeva, Julia (1981) 'Women's Time', *SIGNS: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 7(1): 13–35.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1966) 'Le Triangle Culinaire', *New Society* 22 December: 937–40.
- Lorde, Audre (1984) *Sister Outsider*. Trumansburg and New York: The Crossing Press.
- McCall, Leslie (2005) 'The Complexity of Intersectionality', *SIGNS: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30(3): 1771–880.
- Maihofer, Andrea (1995) *Geschlecht als Existenzweise: Macht, Moral, Recht und Geschlechterdifferenz*. Frankfurt am Main: Helmer.
- Moore, Henrietta (1994) "'Divided We Stand': Sex, Gender and Sexual Difference", *Feminist Review* No.47: 78–95.
- Phoenix, Ann (1998) 'Dealing with Difference: The Recursive and the New', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21(5): 859–80.
- Roberts, Brian (2002) *Biographical Research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Rosenthal, Gabriele and Wolfram Fischer-Rosenthal (2000) 'Analyse narrativ-biographischer Interviews', pp. 456–468 in Uwe Flick et al. (eds) *Qualitative Forschung. Ein Handbuch* [Qualitative Research: A Handbook]. Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt.
- Schein, Gabriele and Sabine Strasser, eds (1997) *Intersextions, Feministische Anthropologie zu Geschlecht, Kultur und Sexualität*. Vienna: Milenia.
- Squires, Judith (1999) *Gender in Political Theory*. Cambridge and Oxford: Polity Press.
- Wortham, Stanton (2001) *Narratives in Action. A Strategy for Research and Analysis*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Alice Ludvig is a lecturer and a research assistant in political science at the University of Vienna. Her main research interests are in questions of gender and diversity, inequality and difference as well as Black feminism in an international and comparative perspective. Address: Department of Industrial Sociology, University of Vienna, Brünner Str. 72, A-1210 Vienna, Austria. [email: Alice.Ludvig@univie.ac.at]

